

*Remarks of
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**Before the Education Committee
On S.B. No. 24, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS**

February 21, 2012

I am writing this letter to express my concern about many aspects of Governor Malloy's Education Reform bill that will have a profound negative impact on the quality of education in our public schools. Specific sections in this bill that bring about the highest level of concern are 28 - 31, those that deal with teacher certification, evaluation, and salaries.

I am in full support of accountability and evaluation of teachers that ensure quality education for all students. An important part of that quality education is encouraging curiosity, creativity, and a desire to engage in new educational experiences. To provide that, students must be in an atmosphere that supports innovative thinking, experiential, multi-modality education, and risk-taking. Putting the level of emphasis recommended by Governor Malloy on teacher appraisal based on students' performance on standardized test scores discourages all these educational opportunities and creates a stilted, lock-step environment. I fear that test-taking skills and preparation will be the primary focus in our classrooms. Instead of creating life-long learners, we will create students who excel in rote responses. This will not achieve the Governor's goal of improving our schools.

As every student knows, an experiment can have only one variable. Student achievement is based on multiple variables, not just the quality of the teacher. Health, home environment, social and emotional well-being, engagement, and motivation all impact the students' achievement. As a special education teacher, I am especially worried about the impact on my students when they are expected to achieve grade level proficiency on standardized tests despite low cognitive abilities, significant learning disabilities, autism, and social-emotional deficits. The new proposal does not consider the developmental differences in all students, with or without IEPs.

I am a teacher in the Wilton Public Schools. All five of my children are graduates of the same school system. I have been a strong supporter of public education; however, if my children were subjected to such test-centered, stilted instruction, I would do everything in my power to send them to private schools.

Thank you.